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The Housewife



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Chapter 1 by Renée Lautermilch

Again, I found myself at Deborah's house for afternoon tea. I promised myself I would stop attending her pretentious little tea parties, but each day, like clockwork, I found myself sitting in her living room with the other women from the neighborhood. Deborah's tea parties weren't so much about socializing as they were about showing off her expert-level homemaker skills. She may have well stepped right out of Good Living magazine with her homemade macaroons, Pinterest-perfect place settings, and perfectly ironed Ralph Lauren outfits.

I remember the day I met Deborah. I was out for a morning walk, exploring the unfamiliar neighborhood my husband and I had just moved to. Deborah waved me over from her driveway. We made small talk, discussed the community and our families, and then Deborah invited me over to afternoon tea. I was happy to make a friend so quickly.

Now, I wonder if Deborah's intentions ever were friendship. Over the last several weeks, I don't feel as if I have come to know her any better than the day we first met. It's as if she is always putting on a show. It's as if she is hiding something -- hiding the truth about who she really is.

Chapter 2 by Devin Hartley

I decided to change the agenda of my weekly Wife-like clinical tea dates. It is so easy to be comfortable in one's habits and routines. I called Deborah on the phone to propose a different kind of

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"Hello," answered Deborah on the second ring.

"Hey Debbie," I said, knowing using an informal name would make her cringe a little.

"Hi, who is this?"

"Deb, it's me, Michelle, from across the street." Again I could feel her jaw tighten.

"Oh, hi, Michelle."

"I know today is one of our normal days for tea, but I'm not feeling it today. I want to do something different. You know, shake things up a little."

"Okay, where do you want to go?" Deborah asked pensively.

"I noticed in the middle of that shopping center with the Starbucks in it a neat little bar called 'Conundrum'. I noticed the other day around Happy Hour a great mix of trucks, motorcycles, and work vans. Let's go there this afternoon and have some adult beverages, and maybe we'll learn a little more about each other."

"Bu.." started Deborah.

"No 'buts,' I am picking you up at 3:45, so be ready."

I quickly hung up the phone, before she could weasel her way out of it.

Chapter 3 by lightningstrikesannah (I'm back!)



The picture-perfect neighbor, scowling, climbed into the passenger seat of my car.

"Come on, stop scowling. Put your happy face on, Debbie, because we are going to have fun!"

"But I have a husband," she whined.

"Who said we were flirting?"

"Oh," she said.

We drove the rest of the way in silence.

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